

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LIBREV 01037 081902Z

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 L-03 SP-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO USDOC WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 6606

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, EWWT, GB, US

SUBJ: SANTA CLARA MINERAL PORT - SOROS CONTRACT

USDOC FOR CONGER

REF: CONGER/BAAS TELECON JULY 8

1. CHARGE OBTAINED COPY OF LETTER SENT JULY 8 TO SOROS
FROM OFFICE OF DIRECTOR OF PORT. LETTER PREPARED BY BACOT.
INFORMAL EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF LETTER AS FOLLOWS:

2. BEGIN TEXT: IN CONFIRMATION OF OUR TELEX OF JULY 7
WE HAVE THE PLEASURE TO STATE THAT:

A. THE CONTRACT FOR A STUDY FOR THE MINERAL PORT WAS
APPROVED BY PRESIDENT OF THE GABONESE REPUBLIC JUNE 23,
1975 UNDER THE NUMBER 141.

B. IN ORDER TO AVOID RISKS OF DELAY, WE SENDING TO YOU
TWO COPIES OF THE SIGNED CONVENTION VIA THE AMERICAN
EMBASSY IN LIBREVILLE.

C. WE WILL PROCEED WITH THE FINANCIAL FORMALITIES VIA
THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE SO THAT YOU WILL BE PAID THE
DOLS 566,000 FORESEEN IN ARTICLE 5-2-1.

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PAGE 02 LIBREV 01037 081902Z

D. WE CONFIRM TO YOU THAT UNDER CONFIDENTIAL INSTRUCTIONS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, WE MUST UNDERTAKE A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE COSTS BETWEEN CONSTRUCTION AT SANTA CLARA AND CONSTRUCTION AT PORT GENTIL. IN THIS REGARD WE ASK YOU IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE TO ONLY PROCEED WITH THE DEFINITIVE STUDIES THAT WOULD BE USEABLE ON ANOTHER SITE WITHOUT MODIFICATION. THE PARTS OF THE PROJECT THAT RISK BEING MODIFIED DEPENDING ON LOCATION OF CONSTRUCTION WILL BE STUDIED VERY QUICKLY, WITH THE UNIQUE GOAL OF OBTAINING AN ESTIMATION OF THEIR COSTS. (THIS CONCERNS NOTABLY THE ACCESS JETTY OF THE PIER.)

3. IN OUR OPINION THE PARTS OF THE PRELIMINARY STUDY ON WHICH THE EVENTUAL CHANGE IN THE SITE WILL HAVE NO EFFECT ARE THE FOLLOWING:

A. 1-3-2 -- STUDY OF TRANSPORT AND COMMERCIALIZATION.

B. 1-3-7 -- PARA A. DIMENSIONS OF THE WORK; PARA B. OPTIMAL PROJECTS FOR RECEIVING ORE FROM COMILOG AND SOMIFER.

4. ON THE OTHER HAND, PORTIONS THAT WILL BE CONDITIONED BY THE CHANGE OF SITE ARE THE FOLLOWING:

A. 1-3-4 -- SURVEY OF THE SITE WHICH SHOULD BE LIMITED TO THE STRICT MINIMUM NECESSARY AND A SUMMARY ESTIMATION.

B. 1-3-5 -- ESTIMATED FOREIGN EXCHANGE COSTS.

C. 1-3-7 C, D, E -- VARIATIONS AND COSTS.

5. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT IN THE PLAN FOR PORT WORK, THE PORT GENTIL SITE APPEARS TO BE MUCH MORE FAVORABLE THAN THAT OF SANTA CLARA FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS: DEPTH OF 25 METERS APPROXIMATELY 700 METERS FROM LAND; SAND FOUNDATION OF GOOD QUALITY; APPROACH ZONE IN SHELTERED WATER. FOR THE ONLAND INSTALLATIONS THERE IS A FLAT ZONE, SWAMPY BUT EASILY IMPROVABLE HYDRAULICALLY WITH GOOD MATERIAL. SINCERELY, FOR THE DIRECTOR GENERAL ON MISSION, THE SECRETARY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 LIBREV 01037 081902Z

GENERAL, PAUL GEORGE NGUEMA.

6. COMMENT: JUST BEFORE DEPARTURE OF AMBASSADOR MCKESSON, MINISTER OF PLAN ANCHOUEY TOLD HIM THAT PORT GENTIL WAS BEING CONSIDERED AS SUBSTITUTE FOR SANTA CLARA. AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT THIS AND POINTED OUT THAT PORT-GENTIL SURROUNDED BY VERY SWAMPY TERRAIN AND THAT THIS IDEA WOULD REQUIRE ADDITIONAL LEG OF TRANSGABON RAILROAD BEING

BUILT TO PORT-GENTIL. AMBASSADOR RAISED POSSIBILITY WITH
RAWIRI FOLLOWING DAY AND RAWIRI SAID THAT OF COURSE
ANCHOUHEY WANTED PORT-GENTIL SINCE HE WAS FROM THERE,
BUT THERE WAS NO POSSIBILITY THAT PORT GENTIL WOULD
BE CHOSEN BECAUSE OF MANY PROBLEMS INVOLVED. EMBASSY
HAD HEARD NOTHING MORE OF PORT-GENTIL PROPOSAL UNTIL
SEEING ABOVE LETTER. CHARGE STILL BELIEVES THAT ONCE
STUDY IS MADE IT WILL BE DISCOVERED THAT PROBLEMS POSED
BY PORT-GENTIL ARE INSURMOUNTABLE.BAAS

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